

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 00744 091744Z

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6691

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, FR, UK, US

SUBJ: CIVAIR: CONCORDE

1. REUTERS REPORTED JAN. 7 THAT ON HIS RETURN TO PARIS CALUDE ABRAHAM OF SGAC, WHO HEADED FRENCH DEL TO COLEMAN HEARING JAN. 5 IN WASHINGTON, SAID GOF WOULD CONSIDER PARTIAL AUTHORIZATION OF CONCORDE SERVICE BY USG A BAD DECISION AND EXPERIMENTAL SOLUTION AN UNACCEPTABLE ONE. REUTERS DISPATCH NOTES "EXPERIMENTAL" REFERS TO RUMORS USG MIGHT AUTHORIZE PROBATIONARY SIX MONTH LANDING RIGHTS AT DULLES.

2. IN INTERVIEW ON LATE EVENING TV NEWSCAST JAN. 7, STATE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION CAVAILLE SAID "PARTIAL" AUTHORIZATION BY USG WOULD BE "UNACCEPTABLE". CAVAILLE ALSO SAID THAT REASON HE HIMSELF DID NOT GO TO WASHINGTON TO TESTIFY AT COLEMAN HEARING WAS BECAUSE GOF CONSIDERED AIR FRANCE APPLICATION WAS "TECHNICAL" MATTER WHICH SHOULD BE HANDLED AT TECHNICAL LEVEL.

3. SINCE CAVAILLE REMARKDS WERE NOT PICKED UP THERE-
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AFTER BY AFP OR NEWSPAPERS, WE QUERIED CAVAILLE'S

CABINET WHETHER WRITTEN TEXT WAS AVAILABLE TO WHICH WE COULD REFER RATHER THAN RELYING ON OUR RECOLLECTION OF CAVAILLE REMARKS ON TV. WE WERE TOLD THAT CAVAILLE HAD SPOKEN EXTEMPORANEOUSLY AND NOT FROM WRITTEN TEXT, AND WHAT HE HAD "MEANT" WAS THAT GOF WOULD CONSIDER PARTIAL AUTHORIZATION ,E.G., LIMITED TO DULLES OR IN TIME, AS "DISCRIMINATORY" MEASURE BY USG.

4. COMMENT: CAVAILLE'S CONTENTION THAT ISSUE OF US LANDING RIGHTS FOR CONCORDE IS "TECHNICAL" MATTER PROBABLY REFLECTS GISCARD LINE (PARIS 426) AGAINST "POLITICIZING" CONCORDE DEBATE. CAVAILLE'S REMARKS ARE OF COURSE NO LESS EQUIVOCAL THAN WERE GISCARD'S, ESPECIALLY SINCE POSSIBLE DISCRIMINATION TO WHICH CAVAILLE THEN ALLUDED WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE FAR MORE THAN "TECHNICAL" IMPLICATIONS FOR GOF. AND FACT THAT CAVAILLE NONTHELESS DOES NOT HESITATE TO SPEAK OUT OF SERVE NOTICE AS OF NOW ON WHAT GOF WOULD FIND ACCEPTABLE FURTHER BELIES CLAIM GOF IS NOT SEEKING TO "POLITICIZE" THE ISSUE. IT MAY BE THAT GISCARD LINE WHICH CAVAILLE ECHOED, AND DECISION NOT TO SEND CAVAILLE TO TESTIFY AT JANUARY 5 HEARING, WERE CONTINGENCY MEASURES DESIGNED AVERT LOSS OF FACE FOR GOF AND THUS GIVE IT GREATER LATITUDE IN TRYING TO LIMIT DAMAGE TO OVER-ALL US-FRANCE RELATIONS IN THE EVENT THAT USG DECISION IS NEGATIVE IN WHOLE OR IN PART. HOWEVER, IT MIGHT BE DANGEROUS TO SPECULATE TOO FAR IN THAT DIRECTION AT THIS STATE.

5. BRUNEAU OF CAVAILLE'S STAFF INFORMS US THAT FRENCH DEL WAS MOST IMPRESSED WITH SECRETARY COLEMAN'S CONDUCT OF JAN 5 HEARING AND FELT THAT NET EFFECT OF PROCEEDINGS MAY HAVE BEEN HELPFUL TO CONCORDE'S CHANCES. HOWEVER, HE SAID, FACT THAT US PRESS BY AND LARGE CONTINUED TO BE UNFRIENDLY TOWARDS CONCORDE WAS SUBJECT OF CONTINUING CONCERN.

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